

5122

A DOWNERS GROVE HISTORIC SITE

MOCHELS' HARDWARE BUILDING

Levi Mertz and Charles Mochel constructed the original building at 36 S Main (later renumbered 5122 Main Street), where the 2 partners opened their business, *Mertz & Mochel*, on June 25, 1884. The building consisted of a basement and 2 stories, utilizing wood columns, beams and floors, and was bordered by alleys on the south end west. Electricity was added in 1900.

In 1922, Mertz sold his interest to Charles Mochel, who formed a partnership with his son, John Mochel, Sr. The business was renamed *Charles Mochel & Son*. Also in 1922, by closing the alley to the south, the Mochels expanded the building for the first time. Next came the 1932 facelift that changed the store front to what is seen today.

After Charles' death in 1946, John Sr. renamed the business *Mochels Hardware*, establishing its legacy under that title. The ambitious 1955 expansion doubled *Mochels* building in size. The main and second floors were extended above the newly excavated basement addition, all reaching the west alley.

John Mochel Jr., joined his father, John Sr., as partner in 1957. In 1960, just a year after the store's 75th anniversary, John Sr. passed away. From that time, John Jr. was sole proprietor until *Mochels* closed in 1995, ending 111 years of serving residents of Downers Grove and neighboring towns. *Mochels* is the only centennial business on Main Street in the history of Downers Grove.

The *Mochels Hardware* building is a tribute to three generations of Mochels who were actively involved in local government, civic organizations, and community service, greatly influencing the development of the Village of Downers Grove for over a century.



DOWNERS GROVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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